WORKS IN PROGRESS

VOLUME 14, NUMBER 12 — THURSTON COUNTY RAINBOW COALITION — APRIL 2004

Reflections on my Government's Crimes against Haiti

By Jeff Sowers

The latest U.S. orchestrated coup d'etat against the democratically elected government of Haiti is yet another vivid example of the mind numbing brutality of the U.S. elite. As I write, U.S. backed death squads are hunting down and murdering what, in all probability, will amount to thousands of pro-democracy citizen activists and leaders. Following the 1991 Coup, the last time the death squads were unleashed on the nation, more than 5000 Haitian citizens were systematically murdered. With this on their minds, many people have fled to hide in the mountains and countryside. In a campaign of terror, equipped with modern spotlight wielding helicopters and high powered weapons, the death squads are searching people out, burning down their homes, torturing, mutilating, and killing. What is happening to Haiti is an unspeakable and horrific crime against humanity perpetrated by the U.S. and Haitian elite, their corporations, and our corrupt government.

Unfortunately, none of this is new. It is but the latest chapter in an ongoing tale of horror and brutality – a tale that has been going on for a long, long time. When looking at this reality it is easy to become cynical about things ever being different, but I continue to believe that they can. In fact, much of my personal inspiration for activist work comes from witnessing the courageous Haitian struggle for a better way of life in the face of overwhelming odds, and the knowledge that my own government plays a central role in their oppression.

It was clear at the time, as it remains clear today, that the U.S. government invariably attacks any nation that deviates, or plans to deviate, from the economic policy prescriptions promulgated by the IMF and World Bank.

To understand the way U.S. institutions operate and carry out these policies it is helpful to look at specific examples. It was for this precise reason that I decided to take a close look at Haiti more than fifteen years ago. After having followed the situation there for several years, in May of 1991, I traveled to Haiti to witness the period following the election of Jean Bertrand Aristide as Haiti's first democratically elected president. It was a time of great hope. Never before in all of Haiti's history had the poor masses, through participation in the electoral process, brought a progressive and populist leader to power.

During the mid 1980's in Haiti, what started as food riots in the central plateau had evolved into a massive popular movement for democracy and social justice. Eighty percent of the population of Haiti lives in extreme poverty and has historically been excluded from the political system. The idea that it was possible for the poor to play a role in the political process, and that it was possible to lift the masses up to the level of

(continues on page 4)

Creating a Peaceful World:

A speech given by Jody Tiller at the Capitol on March 20

Good Afternoon and Welcome. I believe you're here because of hope. Hope for our future, hope for a possibility of a just and peaceful world. I don't know how that will look but I don't believe we'll arrive there through war.

I was raised in the military and served in the Air Force during the first Gulf War. I remain proud of my family's long tradition of military service. I once knew this is how we kept our people, our country, our world safe. After being in the Air Force for five years I transferred to a unit where part of my job was as a security police augmentee. My beliefs in how this world works had altered and I knew I would not shoot a person. I requested conscientious objector paperwork.

I did not know how it would look to choose peace. I don't know how it will look to be a peaceful nation. But that is what I'm committed to now.

There is another way to protect ourselves besides violence and attacking first. A way we aren't well versed in yet there is a long tradition of standing peacefully and overcoming violence. My hope rests on

powerful non-violent actions. Did you know that our country has a long history of non-violent resistance? Our colonists who refused to pay the British stamp tax were performing civil disobedience and tax refusal. Our first Continental Congress was a nonviolent action organization. Other North American primarily non-violent actions include our abolitionist struggle, the labor, peace and women's movements and many other minority group movements.

You might say that this is non-violence against a democratic government and so is easier than elsewhere. Yet it worked against a violent dictator in the Philippines. In 1986 in a four-day uprising Filipinos overthrew Ferdinand Marcos, the Hitler of South East Asia. That action motivated the people of Chile to non-violently oust their brutal dictator Pinoche. South African Apartheid ended with the help of worldwide boycotts and immense nonviolent resistance within South Africa. All of these happened with regular people like you and me, putting themselves on the line because it was the right thing to do and not to do it lessened them. Be bigger than you think you are.

What about someone really tough – how about the Soviet Union. In March 1990 Lithuania proclaimed independence from Russia. Moscow retaliated first economically and ten months later invaded with crack Red Army troops to the Capitol. Hundreds of peaceful demonstrators held hands around the nations TV tower (this TV tower was used to broadcast Lithuanian history and nonviolence trainings including the movie "Gandhi".)

(continues on page 8)

UPDATE

OPD Officer Curtwright disciplined in pedestrian scuffle involving PSE vehicle

By Greg Hohnolt

Olympia: Rich Paddock, a Tlingit native residing here, was knocked from his bike at a crosswalk last August 13th by a PSE van. As reported in *Works in Progress*, OPD officer Curtright, in investigating this accident, appeared to fault Mr. Paddock for the accident because he "was wearing a black shirt," even though the accident took place in broad daylight. No action was taken by Officer Curtright to ticket the PSE driver, and even though there was a witness to the accident, an attorney, Mr. Paddock, who has no health insurance, was stalled in his civil action against PSE by his inability to pay for an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scan and prove culpability in court.

Mr. Paddock also sought an apology from Officer Curtright, and filed a complaint with the Office of Professional Standards (OPS) division of the OPD. The results of this now completed investigation, overseen by Lieutenant James D. Costa, were released on March 5, and Mr. Paddock has asked *Works in Progress* to make this report public.

The investigation concluded that two of the three allegations that Mr. Paddock made in his written complaint were viable. The OPS sustained that *"Officer Curtright used abrupt and rude communication,"* and that *"Officer Curtright failed to conduct a proper police investigation."* The OPS would *not* sustain the allegation that "Officer Wylie failed to properly handle the complaint concerning this matter." The letter also stated that Mr. Paddock's request to speak with Officer Curtright was denied because "unfortunately the officer has decided not to participate"

As a result of this investigation, Mr. Paddock is now seeking remuneration from PSE for hours of work lost due to the accident. He also hopes that if enough public pressure is applied to the OPD as a result of this internal investigation, that Officer Curtright will relent and agree to speak with Mr. Paddock.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Works In Progress is a community newspaper sponsored by the Thurston County Rainbow Coalition. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Rainbow Coalition or the Workers In Progress and are solely those of the authors.

Submissions:

Correspondence, articles, art, and photographs are always welcome. Please, when possible, put articles on a 3.5" IBM-compatible disk (text preferred) or via e-mail. Artwork and photos should be camera-ready/black & white.

WIP reserves the right to publish in whole or part all submissions. For editing purposes, please enclose your phone number.

Articles may be reprinted. Please cite source.

If you don't see your issue being covered in Works In Progress, it's because you aren't writing about it! (Or aren't finding someone else to cover it!)

Send submissions to Works In Progress, PO Box 295, Olympia, WA 98507-0295, <wip@olywa.net>

Back Issues:

Get your catalog of indexed WIPs below. Some back issues are available in the Timberland Library system. WIP is being archived on microfilm by the UW Library.

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Mission Statement:

"Our aim is to confront injustice and encourage a participatory democracy based on economic, social, and environmental justice. Works In Progress is dedicated to providing a voice for those most affected by the exclusionary and unfair practices that seek to silence the oppressed."

Anti-Discrimination Clause:

We will collectively endeavor to be sensitive and respectful to all those oppressed in this society, and their issues. However, if and when we should make a mistake in this regard, we expect to acknowledge it and to express regret for injury or insult given.

Governing Tool:

The following statement will become part of the Editorial Policy and will be the governing tool for the Anti-Discrimination Clause: *WIP will make every effort to work with the contributor of material considered by WIP to be offensive in order to reach a mutually agreed upon resolution, but WIP reserves the right as a last resort to edit or not print submitted material.*

Announcements, etc.

OLYNOW is looking for creative organizers

Last year's celebratory street party was a great success. If you'd like to participate in the creation of this year's OlyNow, we want to hear from you. We are looking for projects that embody the following principles: respect, diversity, spirituality, justice, equality, sustainability, community.

Thanks to a grant from the community sustaining fund, there's money available to get this event rolling. When, where and who is up to you!

Please bring your ideas to our first meeting on Monday, May 3, 6:30 at the Olympia Timberland Library.

Questions?
E-mail curator@fertileground.org or call Marie at 456-3829-x3. You can access OlyNow's website via:
fertileground.org/olynow

Take back the earth day

The Green Party of South Puget Sound will be hosting a public dinner and 'Public Citizen' awards ceremony honoring local activists at a 'Take Back the Earth Day' event on Thursday, April 22nd at the First Christian Church social hall, 701 Franklin St in downtown Olympia. There will be a potluck dinner starting at 6pm. A keynote address by Patrick Mazza, founder of Olympia's Climate Solutions and member of the Green Party/US international committee starting at 7pm. Local Climate Solutions activists Chris Hawkins and Theresa Myers will also speak about "Thinking Globally, Acting Locally". Awards to local community activists who exemplify the Green Party's 10 key values will be given recognition and awards following the keynote address.

State Green Party Convention in Olympia

The Green Party of South Puget Sound will be hosting the upcoming state Green Party convention on **April 17-18**. It will be held at the **United Churches at Capital Blvd and Union Ave near the capital campus**. TVW will be filming the Saturday April 17th portion of the convention which runs from 9-5pm and is open to the public. Special Guests include David Cobb, general counsel to the national Green Party, and Peter Camejo who ran on the Green Party ticket in the 2002 and 2003 (recall) California governors races. Both Cobb and Camejo are running for the Green Party's presidential nomination which will be determined in June in Milwaukee. Keynote speaker will be David Korten, author of the international best-sellers 'When Corporations Rule the World', 'The Post-Corporate World: Life after Capitalism and 'Globalizing Civil Society'. Call Chris at 705-3528 for more information, especially if you would like to attend.

Event about Columbia, Coke and Free Trade

Meet Colombian speaker Luis Adolfo Cardona, a Coca-Cola Union leader forced to flee Colombia for his life. Also, Tara Widner, United Workers'

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WIP Schedule

Submission Deadline:

Friday, April 23rd

Proofreading Meeting:

Call 956 1168 for more info

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APRIL 2004

Laurel Smith's trial of ordeal*

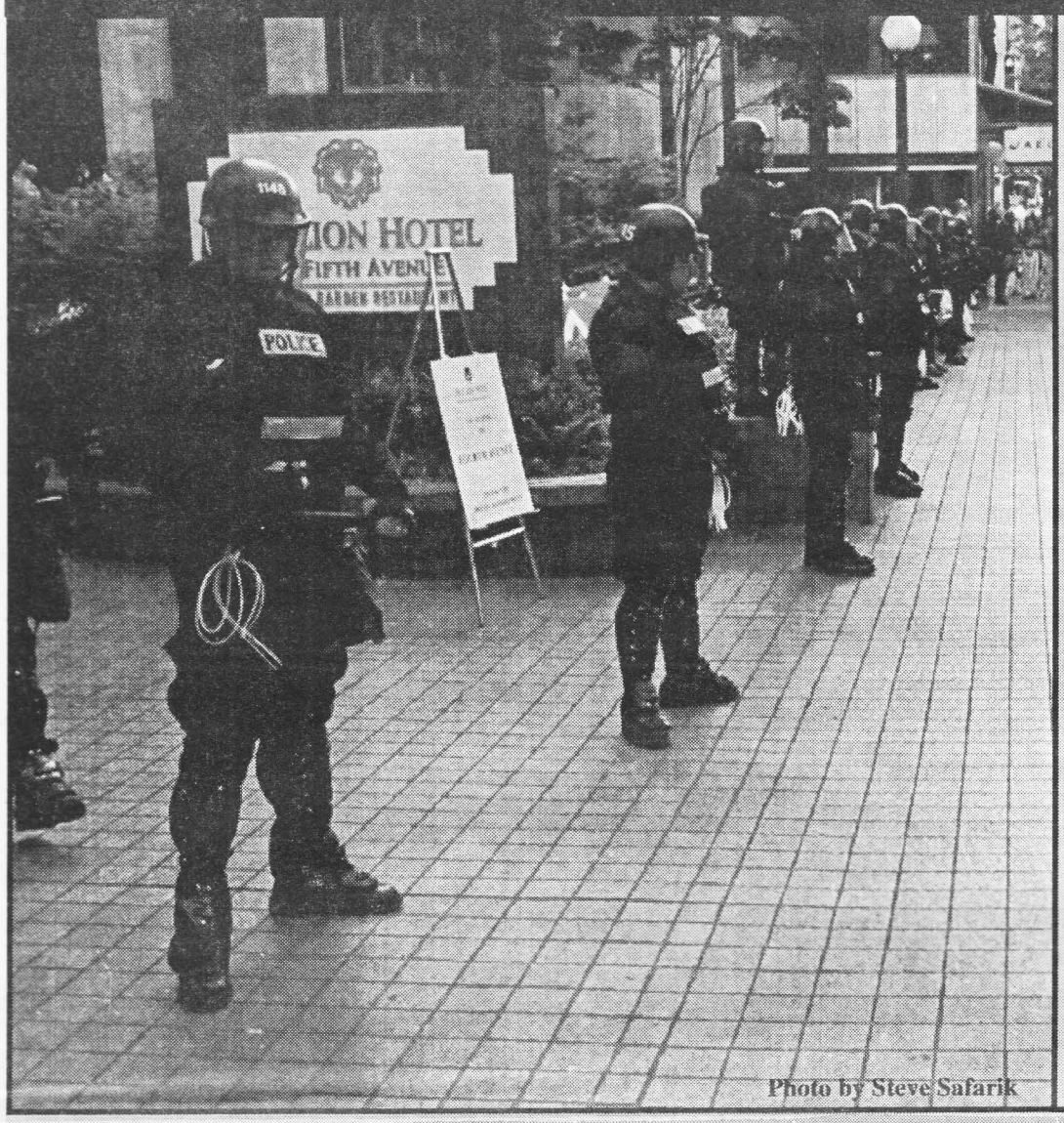

Photo by Steve Safarik

June 2, 2003 Seattle police assaulted Olympia resident Laurel Smith. As she was arrested at the L.E.I.U. protest in downtown Seattle, they beat her head against the pavement causing her to lose conscientiousness. A friend then witnessed police "dragging her by her ankles along the street." SPD denied her medical treatment.

The next morning Laurel was released from custody at 3 am and left to wander the streets in "a confused daze."

Her trial begins March 31 and she invites all those interested to attend.

For up-to-date trial information, please visit www.frolympia.org

Source: Philip Dawdy, *Seattle Weekly*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
* trial of ordeal -- "test of guilt or innocence by subjection of the accused to severe pain or torture, survival of which was taken as divine proof of innocence" The Oxford Dictionary				**1** 2003: Jessica Lynch "rescued" 2003: Judge recommends tossing convictions of 38 mostly black residents of Tulia TX	**2** 1864: Congress authorizes the use of "In God We Trust" on all coins. 2003: Black Hawk helicopter/Navy Hornet plane shot down in Iraq	**3** 2003: Patriot missile responsible for downing Navy plane 2003: Father says Jessica Lynch wasn't shot or stabbed
4 1999: Belgrade: NATO attack oil refineries 2003: 750 attend peace rally in spite of shooting threat called Bellingham Herald	**5** 2003: Israeli troops shoot human shield from NM in the head 2003: 8 more European tourists disappear in Algeria; total 29	**6** 2003: CIA /US Special Operations forces assassinating Baath Party members/Republican Guard, disabling power plants, phone service	**7** 2003: Relief org reports 3 million have died in Congo's civil war 2003: Apex Grocery across from Ralph's burns to the ground	**8** 2003: US tank fires on the Palestine Hotel in Baghdad killing 3 foreign journalists 2003: US rocket strays into Iran kills teenager	**9** 2003: US troops topple Saddam statue while US media misleads public with an illusion of Iraqis celebrating in the streets	**10** 2003: US House endorses drilling in Alaska wildlife refuge 2003: Harvard claims heart disease greater risk than terrorism
11 2003: British human shield in West Bank critically wounded by Israeli when he tried to protect Palestinian children from gunfire	**12** 2003: WA state criticizes Army Corps of Engineers for lowering the level of White River resulting in the death of young salmon	**13** 2003: World Bank says Global poverty could be halved by 2015 if rich countries lower trade barriers and increase foreign aid	**14** 1901: NY actors arrested for wearing costumes on Sunday 1906: Springfield, OH: 2 Blacks burn to death before crowd of 3,000	**15** 2003: WA senate overturn citizen initiatives mandating smaller class sizes and more health coverage for working poor	**16** 2003: WA state spotted owl population dropping 5 to 8% a year, decline is worse than worse case scenario predicted in 1994	**17** 2003: Russia parliament member, vocal critic of Putin slain 2003: WA Senate approves 9% tuition rate increase
18 1996: Lebanon: Israeli shells meant for Hezbollah slam into UN refugee camp 2003: Baghdad: 1000s protest US occupation	**19** 2003: Miller puts $15 million price on the Tumwater brewery 2003: Study reveals 1 in 4 children in Harlem have asthma	**20** 2003: GAO reveals EPA Clinton admin. failed to raise fines by inflation rate saving polluters $30 million in fines and penalties	**21** 1962: Seattle: Century 21 Exposition opens 1997: Supreme Court rules that Brown U. discriminated against female athletes	**22** 2003: Fed court ends Harry Potter ban in Arkansas school district 2003: US sugar lobby says WHO's sugar use warning overstated	**23** 2003: Study shows 90,000 US cancer deaths linked to obesity 2003: Feds reveals renewed weapons grade plutonium production	**24** 2003: Bush: Saddam may have destroyed, moved, hidden WMD 2003: Ashcroft pulls illegal aliens' right to release on bond
25 2003: Army Sec White resign over tiff w/ Rumsfeld about means of modernizing Army 2003: US paratrooper killed in Afghanistan	**26** 2003: Tacoma police chief Brame fatally wounds wife, kills self 2003: WA senate approves 5-cent gas tax increase	**27** 2003: WA house passes 5-cent gas tax increase 2003: Lab finds lettuce in CA supermarkets contaminated w/ toxic rocket-fuel ingredient	**28** 2003: N Korea offers to end nuclear weapons program for fuel oil 2003: US troops open fire on Iraqi demonstration killing 13	**29** 2003: US troops fire on demonstrators protesting killing of 13 Iraqis 2003: Striking oil workers seize 97 hostages on several oil rigs	**30** 2003: Hanford: WA state says Feds in violation of states hazardous-waste laws w/ radioactive waste buried in unlined trenches	**If you want peace, work for justice.** **Pope Paul VI**

From page 1: Reflections on my Government's Crimes against Haiti

The idea that it was possible for the poor to play a role in the political process, and that it was possible to lift the masses up to the level of what Aristide called "poverty with dignity," caught on among the Haitian poor.

what Aristide called "poverty with dignity," caught on among the Haitian poor. Driven in part by economic desperation, and despite extreme repression and political violence, hope for democracy and a better future spread through the slums of Port-au-Prince and across the countryside. The poor masses latched onto the idea that if they could participate in elections, then a better government could be elected...a government that would respect their rights and dignity as human beings. Thus it happened that no amount of electoral corruption or threat of violence could stop the massive wave of overwhelming popular support that brought Aristide to power in the December 1990 election.

During my month long visit there, while I could not help but be infected with the jubilation and hope, at the same time I felt a sense of dread about what the U.S. response would be. Having recently observed the U.S. policy of supporting the Contra war on Nicaragua following the election of the Sandinista government, I knew how deadly and anti-democratic U.S. policy could be.

It was clear at the time, as it remains clear today, that the U.S. government invariably attacks any nation that deviates, or plans to deviate, from the economic policy prescriptions promulgated by the IMF and World Bank. The ultimate goal appears to be a global economy set up and managed in accordance with the interests of the rich and their corporations. In order to create this global economic system, other nations are coerced into adopting internal economic policies that are contrary to their national interest. These policies include the elimination of trade restrictions; the free flow of capitol out of the country; opening up all sectors of the economy, such as industry, banks, telecommunications, water, etc. to ownership by foreign corporations; and the suppression of labor standards, worker rights, and environmental regulation. Simply put, these are the economic conditions that allow corporations to maximize their profits. That these policies also leave the vast majority of humanity living in miserable poverty, as well as devastating the environment, seems not to be a significant concern to the rich.

It doesn't matter how big the country is. As the Haitian experience shows, the same conditions are imposed on poor countries as more resource rich nations, such as Iraq. The IMF and World Bank are enormous institutions, with agents working in every nation of the planet, including small poor nations such as Haiti. They operate as a kind of Ministry of Global Economic Law. Leaders and nations who defy this law are subjected to economic and military assault by the United States and its allies, often working in the shadows through the CIA and other covert agencies. This is the manner in which the U.S. global empire works. If anything, weaker and poorer nations such as Haiti are dealt with more harshly than wealthier nations, if for no other reason than they have less ability to resist, and are easier to push around and make examples of.

In exchange for restoring him to power in 1994, the U.S. demanded that Aristide completely abandon the social reform platform on which he had been elected, and instead strictly adhere to the IMF's policy dictates. This was extensively reported on in the press at the time. Reluctantly, Aristide went along, no doubt feeling as if there were no alternatives. Perhaps he felt his return could help establish stable, democratically elected government in Haiti, and that social reforms would follow later as a matter of course. One example of the policies Haiti was forced to implement by the IMF was the elimination of tariffs on rice imports. Today, cheap U.S. rice, subsidized by the U.S. department of agriculture, has devastated Haitian rice production.

But while Aristide went along with the IMF agenda, he at the same time continued to seek social reform on whatever fronts he could, by building schools, training doctors and expanding health care to the poor, and strengthening the independence of the government. When in 2000 he and the Lavalas Family party swept the presidential and legislative elections in overwhelming majorities, with Aristide receiving more than 90% of the vote, the U.S. saw its grip on the Haitian government slipping, and began a sustained economic and political attack on the nation.

Using baseless charges of flawed elections as a propaganda cover, the U.S. blocked all aid to Haiti, creating an economic crisis. At the same time the U.S. provided financial backing to government opposition groups, funneled through US AID and the International Republican Institute. In retrospect this all appears to be groundwork for the violent overthrow of the democratically elected government in February.

And so the horrible saga continues. One has to marvel at the courage and persistence of the Haitian people in their struggle for democracy and social justice, and weep for the tremendous pain and suffering they endure year, after year, after year. Yet their struggle simply cannot succeed against the overwhelming power of multinational corporations and the U.S. government. Machetes are no match for modern weaponry. Thus it is that the ultimate success of the Haitian democracy movement is intimately interwoven with the progressive struggle here in the United States to get our own government under control. We can and we must succeed in this endeavor, for the sake of Haiti, for the sake of the world, and for the sake of our own moral conscience. It's important to keep in mind that it is the wealthy elite, not the American people, who drive the policy agenda and who are ultimately responsible for the crimes against humanity committed in Haiti and elsewhere. We live in a nation run by the rich and for the rich. But it doesn't have to be this way. I believe we can create political institutions that are not corrupted and controlled by the rich, and that instead are managed according to the interests and decent values of the people. It's time that we bring democracy to the United States, so that Haitians can bring democracy to Haiti.

A new website has been created by local activist Dennis Mills in response to the U.S.-backed coup against Haiti's democracy.
Go to www.criticalconcern.com and click on "Haiti".

One has to marvel at the courage and persistence of the Haitian people in their struggle for democracy and social justice ... Yet their struggle simply cannot succeed against the overwhelming power of multinational corporations and the U.S. government

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Do I look like a rapist?

By Todd Denny

I'd like to ask you a seemingly simple question: Do I look like a rapist? What do you think? I'm a white male, college educated, fairly unimposing. I don't look violent or aggressive. As a matter of fact, I don't look a lot different from tens of thousands of guys in our culture. Once again, I pose the question: Do I look like a rapist?

Well, the reality is that most rapists in our culture, in our communities and on our campuses don't look a lot different from me. They're everyday, ordinary types of guys, going out on dates, meeting people, trying to decide whom they like, trying to be "successful" with women, what ever that means. Now, if I were to ask just about any guy reading this article if they were against rape I'd bet my last dollar they'd all say they were and would follow up by saying they wouldn't do anything like that. And you know what? I'd believe them. I think most guys are trying to do the right thing, to lead lives that are respectful and non-abusive to women.

But the reality is that some of the same guy's who would say they are opposed to rape would say it's OK, under certain circumstances , to use force to obtain sex. What they do not understand or have not come to accept is that force is the difference between rape and romance. So what are some of these situations? Let's examine three of the top so-called "deserving" rape victim characteristics that are embraced by too many guys in our culture.

1) If she has been drinking or using drugs she is a more deserving victim. **2)** If she is dressed in a way that we, as men, consider to be sexy or promiscuous, she is deserving of being raped. **3)** If we think she is sexually active or has multiple sex partners.

So check your attitudes and beliefs. One might ask, "If a man has been drinking does he deserve to be robbed or physically assaulted?" Of course not. Is it more likely that bad things happen when alcohol or drugs are abused? Yes! But men have to stop thinking that women deserve to be sexually abused. Women *never deserve* it any more than men deserve to be taken advantage of. Until we stop such thinking, we may indeed become rapists – even if we don't look like one.

The Persecution of Falun Gong Hits Home

By Genevieve Long

World issues of enough significance to make it to the mainstream media are rarely isolated in their scope or impact. Especially in the case of human rights issues, there are correlations at the local level. A stark case of this is the persecution of the peaceful meditation practice called Falun Gong (also known as Falun Dafa).

Falun Gong is a simple, yet profound, meditation practice that is guided by the principles of truth, compassion, and tolerance. Practicing Falun Gong means doing the exercises and studying the book that guides the practice, Zhuan Falun. There is no religious format or worship in Falun Gong, no membership or money is involved, and all relevant information about it can be found for free on the internet at www.falundafa.org. Falun Gong experienced unprecedented popularity in Mainland China during the 1990's, until Chinese dictator Jiang Zemin saw the huge numbers of those practicing—100 million—as a personal threat to his power. The persecution Jiang instigated against Falun Gong began in July, 1999.

While many people are aware of the 4½ year old violent, government sponsored persecution raging in mainland China, Americans have started to realize that there is a real impact closer to home. Chinese consulates across the US and the Chinese Embassy in Washington, DC have acted as tentacles to perpetuate slander and instigate hatred against Falun Gong. These Chinese government offices on US soil have, time and time again, smeared the name of Falun Gong and tried to prevent those who practice it from living in peace and safety. Two years ago in Chicago, a Falun Gong practitioner's car was firebombed and last year New York Falun Gong practitioners were physically attacked in Chinatown. In our own city of Seattle, former mayor Paul Schell caved in to pressure from Chinese consular officials during the would-be 1999 WTO meetings, rescinding a proclamation given in recognition of a Falun Gong conference. Mayors in several other cities throughout the country including Santee, Saratoga, Pasadena, and St. Louis have also bent under Chinese government pressure. Yet why would the Chinese pressure a foreign government on an issue that they claim is internal?

Our federal government, recognizing the extraordinary nature of this blatant pressure on US officials at all levels, are currently considering House Resolution 304, which is now before the US Congress. The resolution states, "The Government of the People's Republic of China should immediately stop interfering in the exercise of religious and political freedoms within the United States, such as the right to practice Falun Gong, that are guaranteed by the United States Constitution and cease using the diplomatic missions in the United States to spread falsehoods about the nature of Falun Gong." Washington State, with its close economic and social ties to China, hasn't been able to escape this interference.

Consider the case of the former Chinese Consul General in San Francisco, Mr. Wang Yunxiang, who was given honorary Washington State citizenship on his way out of office by Governor Locke. The standard practice of giving honorary citizenship to all exiting consul generals was naturally applied in the case of Consul Wang. Looking at the evidence of the man's record and the overall situation in the persecution of Falun Gong, it would benefit the people of our state to re-evaluate this practice to more accurately reflect the values of our community. If more Washington State citizens understood how Consul Wang hurt our state and its people, they may not be supportive of granting him honorary state citizenship, no matter how standard of a practice it is.

Evidence shows that the Chinese Consulate in San Francisco, under the direction of Wang Yunxiang, actively participated in and carried out Chinese dictator Jiang Zemin's overseas policy of persecuting Falun Gong. They contacted elected officials in each city of the Bay area who supported Falun Gong and spread lies about the nature of this peaceful practice. Three years ago, on a TV program hosted by Channel 26, Wang verbally attacked Falun Gong in an attempt to deceive the Chinese community. In his official post, he also organized a 'Chinese against Falun Gong symposium.' Wang also issued a news release in an attempt to mislead the public and create the impression that 'Overseas are against Falun Gong', in an attempt to deceive mainland Chinese people.

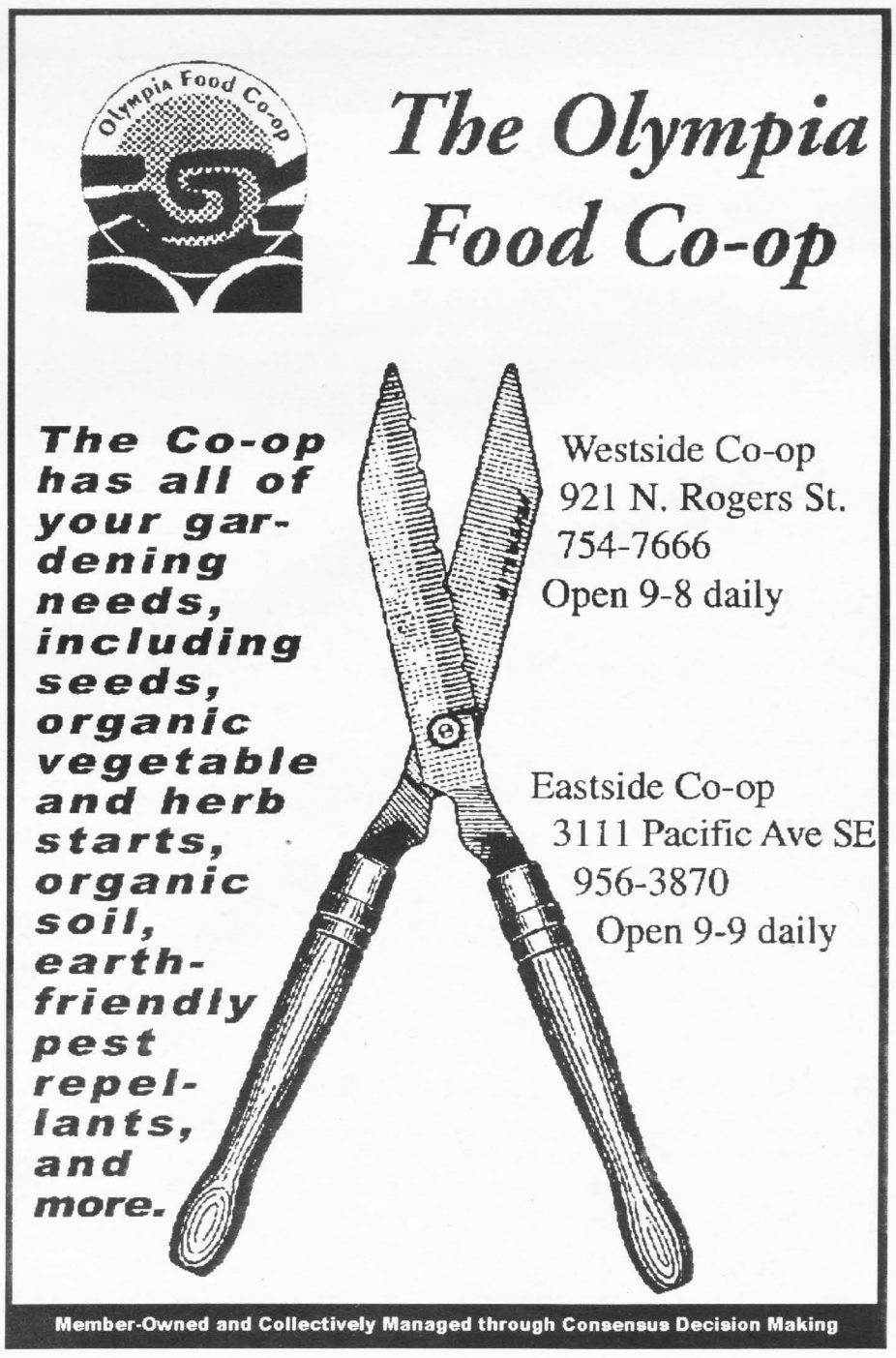
While on US soil and serving in his official consular duties, Wang and his staff openly violated our guaranteed freedoms of belief, expression, and press. They violated Falun Gong practitioners' basic human rights, divided the Chinese community, and spread lies and hatred. Many letters filled with hate-inciting lies and falsified statistics were sent to our elected officials, urging them to withhold support of Falun Gong and those who practice it. Several Chinese language media sources wrote stories quoting Wang on the topic of Falun Gong over the last few years. Some of these stories are still available to the public, and one news story even describes a dialogue between Wang, Governor Locke, and four Washington State city mayors. The story, written in Chinese, depicts our own public officials as being sympathetic towards the persecutors of Falun Gong, promising the consul to warn their constituents about its "true" nature. Under the leadership of Consul Wang, consular officials even resorted to threats in an attempt to hinder elected officials from supporting Falun Gong.

In June 2002 the former mayor of Saratoga, California, Stan Bogosian, testified before Congress that in November 2000, when he was mayor of Saratoga, he issued a proclamation to honor Falun Gong practitioners for their contribution to the community. In the proclamation, he clearly supported Falun Gong practitioners' rights to hold peaceful rallies all over the world. He soon received a phone call from the Chinese Consulate in San Francisco requesting a face to face meeting. When consular representatives came to City Hall, they handed the mayor a letter from the Consul to Mr. Bogosian, urging him to retract the proclamation, which Mr. Bogosian flatly refused to do. The next day, the mayor noticed a car sent by the Chinese Consulate parked outside of his house to watch him.

San Francisco City Supervisor Chris Daly also testified before Congress that in his district, many Chinese immigrants called him and told him they had been threatened by the Chinese government. Some American citizens in his district also related similar incidents to him. Daly tried to send a message to the Chinese government that this kind of behavior is not acceptable by raising a brief resolution urging the Chinese government to stop the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners. On October 5th, 2001, in response to the resolution, Consul Wang wrote a letter filled with false and slanderous information to the chairman of the city council in an attempt to stifle Mr. Daly's efforts.

As a state, Washington has a proud tradition of respecting human rights and a rule of international morality. How will the leaders of our state answer when history asks what they did during this time? How will the citizens of Washington feel when they realize what was happening right beneath their noses? It is an issue that, if ignored, will become our deepest regret. We still have the opportunity to stand up in support of human rights and the rights of Falun Gong practitioners in the US and China to exercise their beliefs regarding peace and safety.

At this very moment, House Concurrent Resolution 304 stands before our congressional leaders in Washington, D.C., condemning the persecution in China and the overseas interference by Chinese government officials in US domestic affairs. Washington State should follow suit. To allow such an honor to be bestowed upon an individual who slandered and targeted peaceful, innocent people in his official consular duties while on US soil would be shameful to our state and its people. Please, Mr. Governor, rescind the honorary Washington State citizenship for Wang Yunxiang and send a message to China that we are a state that respects human rights.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Olympia Says Yes to Peace and Justice

By Sarah Loose

On March 20th Olympians joined together with millions from over 500 cities in more than 60 countries around the world in saying No! to war and Yes! to peace. The Global Day of Action, initiated by major U.S. anti-war coalitions United for Peace and Justice and A.N.S.W.E.R (Act Now to Stop War & End Racism), marked the one-year anniversary of the invasion of Iraq.

In Olympia, a gathering of over a hundred Drummers for Peace at Capitol Lake set the tone for the day, beating together in a common rhythm under the warmth of a sunny spring day. Protest organizers from the Olympia Movement for Justice and Peace took a break from setting up for the afternoon's rally at Heritage Park to join them.

Following the veterans' speeches, over 1000 men and women and children marched down the streets of Olympia, sidewalk chalk and signs in hand. The march ended at Heritage Park, where protesters gathered in a spirit of celebration and commitment.

Speakers from a variety of backgrounds drew connections between the war in Iraq and the many obstacles to peace worldwide. March organizer and Master of Ceremonies Larry Mosqueda touched on the recent tragedies, setbacks *and* signs of hope in El Salvador, Spain and Haiti. Shaheed Nuriddin talked about the persistent racism against Arabs in our country, referencing the situation at Guantánamo Bay and the more locally known case of Captain Yee. Thirteen-year old Caleb Hayes, creator of the humorous and informative www.anti-bush.com site, highlighted the absurd and hypocritical antics of the Bush administration.

Newlywed Anna Schlect rushed on stage after returning from Portland where she and her partner were married, and called for a renewed commitment to work for justice, even as we celebrate current advances such as those in the movement for LGBT rights. Phan Nguyen, a local International Solidarity Movement member, underscored similarities between the occupations of Iraq and Palestine. What became clear as speakers touched on a wide variety of issues was how they are all part of a common struggle for justice.

What became clear as speakers touched on a wide variety of issues was how they are all part of a common struggle for justice.

The protest itself began at noon at the Capitol Campus, with a series of speeches by local Veterans opposed to the war. Jody Tiller, veteran of the first Gulf War, urged participants to follow in the long, global tradition of nonviolent resistance. Dan Ryan, Larry Kerschner, and Dennis Mills, three members of local Veterans for Peace chapters, affirmed their commitment to the cause of peace, speaking out against the Bush administration's current foreign policy and calling for an end to the occupation of Iraq. Especially moving was recently returned nurse Anita Ganz's description of treating the wounded from Iraq, particularly her account of Iraqi children's suffering – not only from wartime violence, but from serious malnutrition after a decade of U.S.-imposed economic sanctions.

Meanwhile, children made peace buttons, planted "seeds for peace", had their faces painted and created a banner for peace at a special "Kids' Tent". Hot Club Sandwich gave an enlivened performance. And covering Al Giordano's song "Red Emma," members of Citizen Band expressed the need to keep spirits up in the work for peace. "Well some folks think they're real revolutionaries, quite the contrary, they're just real ordinary, work all night, work all day, they never did learn how to play or dance , or sing, or shout... I'll dance my way to freedom!"

Such was the atmosphere at Heritage Park - uplifting, one of creativity and enthusiasm. "One thing I noticed was the irrepressible spirit of the participants. We chose to express joy and hope for a better world. The activities at Heritage Park were one big celebration," said Dennis Mills, Quaker peace activist, and host of the www.criticalconcern.com website, which includes a comprehensive collection of articles and information on a variety of important peace and justice related topics.

Another activist described the day as "serious but upbeat. As awful as world problems are, we as individuals have to come together, which is what we did today. We informed people about the dire situation in Iraq, but we also came together to have fun. We are learning from people in Iraq and oppressed peoples elsewhere that is necessary to be outraged and resist, but it is also necessary to celebrate and play if we are going to be in this struggle for the long haul– life goes on and so must we."

"It was so beautiful to see children running around blowing millions and millions of lovely iridescent bubbles and making crafts, along with people lounging and admiring the lake as they listened to speakers, or playing in the muddy grass! The hot sun was a blessing, despite my sunburns," remarked Sara Lankutis, who read a powerful statement by Indian student activist Kaori Suzuki. Carrie Day, a local advocate for low-income families, volunteered with children's activities and noted the importance of grassroots, community events such as this that are inclusive, accessible and free.

The march in Olympia was one of many around the country and the world. In New York City over 100,000 people took to the streets. Mara Verheyden-Hilliard of the Partnership for Civil Justice and member of the A.N.S.W.E.R. Coalition steering committee said the protesters were "united in their opposition to the Bush program of war, conquest and empire. Members of the Arab and Muslim community marched shoulder to shoulder with military families and veterans demanding an end to the occupation of Iraq." Fifty thousand marched in San Francisco; protests in Los Angeles and Chicago also drew tens of thousands of participants.

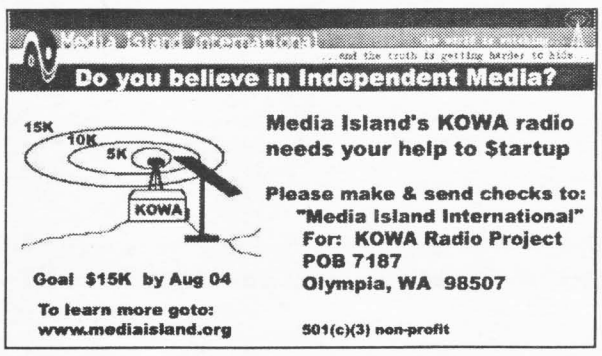
In Rome, over a million people filled the streets, while demonstrations in Madrid numbered in the hundreds of thousands. Protestors from London to Tokyo, Buenos Aires to Paris came out in a strong show of global solidarity.

Solidarity and cooperation were characteristic of the organization of protests not only internationally, but also locally here in Olympia. Numerous participants commented on the well-organized nature of the event, due in large part to the cooperation between so many groups. The Olympia Movement for Justice and Peace, OMJP, was the main sponsor; co-sponsors included: Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance; BRICK, Building Revolution by Increasing Community Knowledge, South Puget Sound Community College; Evergreen Political Information Center; Fellowship of Reconciliation; First Christian Church Outreach Committee; Green Party of Puget Sound; International Solidarity Movement/ Olympia; Last Word Books; Mason County Peace Matters; Masters in Public Administration students/faculty, The Evergreen State College: Joan Bantz, Cherie Berthow, Dave Finnell, Carrie Lybecker, Fletcher Ward; National Organization for Women Thurston County; Olympia FreeSkool; Olympia Jews Against the Occupation; Olympia Rafah Sister City Project; Olympia Zen Center; Olympians for Peace in the Middle East; Social Justice Committee of Olympia Unitarian-Universalist Congregation; Social Justice Committee of St. Michael Catholic Church; SPEECH (South Puget Sound Environmental Education Clearinghouse); Stonewall Youth; United for Peace and Justice Thurston County; Veterans for Peace Chapter 92 (Western Washington), Rachel Corrie Brigade; Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition.

A special thanks goes out to the many groups and individuals that donated their time and resources to make the day a success: Black Lake Organic for potting soil used at the children's tent, Earthbound Productions for the two tents, GRUB for seeds and starter boxes used at the children's tent, Olympia Food Co-op for children's snacks, Dave Sederberg of Pacific Stage for the sound system at Heritage Park, Mark Schmitt of Music and Sports for the sound system at the Capitol, Lieutenant Steve Oderman and Sergeant Cori Schumacher of the Olympia Police Department for their assistance, and the countless individuals who planned and participated in diverse ways, modeling the spirit of humility, creativity and commitment that a more just and peaceful world is built on!

The Olympia Movement for Justice and Peace (OMJP) is committed and looks forward to continuing to work together with these and other organizations in this ongoing struggle. Upcoming plans include organizing for May Day activities. Our meetings are every second and fourth Wednesday at the Olympia Community Center. We hope you will join us!

For more information and photographs of the March 20th march and rally, visit **www.omjp.org**.



Seeking answers from Israel

By Cindy Corrie

Rachel stood to protect a home and family in Gaza because the U.S. and Israel rejected a U. N. proposal to send international human rights monitors there

March 10, 2004

On March 16, 2003, my daughter Rachel Corrie was killed in Rafah in the Gaza Strip. She was run over by an Israeli bulldozer manned by two soldiers. The Israeli Government exonerated the soldiers, closed the case, and refuses to release to the U.S. Government the report on the Military Police Investigation into Rachel's killing. "Conclusions" to that report have been released. In them, the soldiers are identified by their initials: Sergeant Y.F. and Sergeant E.V. Their initials are nearly all we know of them. I wonder about Y.F. and E.V. I wonder if they will pause on March 16th and remember, as we will.

Rachel was an unarmed peace activist trying to prevent the demolition of the home of a Palestinian pharmacist, his wife, and three children. She believed that nonviolent direct action against the Israeli occupation would make Palestinians, and also Israelis and Americans, more secure. Rachel stood to protect a home and family in Gaza because the U.S. and Israel rejected a U. N. proposal to send international human rights monitors there. International activists went instead. Rachel stood protesting illegal home demolitions that the U.S. opposes on the record, yet fails to stop – destruction that we support with billions in annual military aid to Israel for bulldozers, apache helicopters, F-16s, and more.

Rachel wrote to me from Rafah, "This has to stop. I think it is a good idea for us all to drop everything and devote our lives to making this stop. I don't think it's an extremist thing to do anymore. I still really want to dance around to Pat Benatar and have boyfriends and make comics for my coworkers. But I also want this to stop."

On March 17, 2003, President Bush spoke with Prime Minister Sharon about Rachel's killing. Sharon assured Bush that the Israeli Government would undertake a "thorough, credible, and transparent investigation" and would report those results to the United States.

On March 19, 2003, Richard Boucher, Spokesman for the U.S. Department of State, noted in reference to Rachel, "When we have the death of an American citizen, we want to see it fully investigated. That is one of our key responsibilities overseas, is to look after the welfare of American citizens and to find out what happened in situations like these..."

In Congress, Washington State Representative Brian Baird introduced HCR111 calling on the U.S. Government to "undertake a full, fair, and expeditious investigation into the death of Rachel Corrie." We were warned that passage was unlikely because of strong sentiment in Congress to avoid any legislation that appears critical of Israel. Nevertheless, fifty-six courageous House members have now signed HCR111.

Despite the promises of a "transparent" investigation, only the Israeli report's "Conclusions" have been released to the U.S. Two American Embassy staff in Tel Aviv and my husband and I were allowed to "view" the full document, compiled by the Military Advocate to the Southern Command. While it references evidence gathered by the IDF Military Police, no primary evidence is included. Commenting on the report on July 1, 2003, Richard LeBaron, U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission in Tel Aviv stated, "...there are several inconsistencies worthy of note."

For our family, the report raises questions and fails to reconcile differences between the Israeli soldiers who say they could not see Rachel and seven international eyewitnesses who say she was clearly visible. Despite lingering concerns, there has been no move by the White House, State Department, or Justice Department to initiate a U.S. investigation. Some ask whether a precedent exists for investigating in another country without being "invited." The Israeli Government has apparently not extended such an invitation.

The London Metropolitan Police, on the other hand, are now conducting inquests into deaths in Rafah of British nationals Tom Hurndall and James Miller. In a seven-week period in 2003, Tom, James, and Rachel were all struck down in the same area, along the border between Egypt and Gaza where the IDF is building a high steel wall and demolishing hundreds of Palestinian homes. Remarkably, the London police recently transferred the Hurndall and Miller cases to one coroner, reasoning that a series of similar deaths in a short time could indicate "a more complex systematic problem" within the Israeli military.

Our family continues to call for a U.S. investigation into Rachel's death. As we wait, I still wonder about Y.F. and E.V. I wonder if they, too, see images of Rachel lying before the bulldozer. I wonder if they, too, are suffering, or if March 16, 2003, was for them just another day on the job. I wonder.

This article was originally printed in the Boston Globe.

For more information about Rachel Corrie and HCR111, the bill mentioned this article, go to www.criticalconcern.com and click on "Rachel Corrie".

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Nader's voice is needed

By Janet Jordan

Newspapers around the country are expressing shock at Ralph Nader's defiant announcement of candidacy. Is he stupid? they wonder. Is he trying to get George Bush re-elected?

Nader should feel a sense of obligation if he got Bush elected in the first place, as the Democrats claim. But it isn't true. Al From, chair of the Democratic Leadership Council, wrote in Blueprint Magazine (1/24/01) that according to their own exit polls, Bush would have beaten Gore by one percentage point if Nader hadn't run in 2000.

Of course, the facts won't make any difference. People know what they know.

In this new election, Nader will most likely not get the votes he got in the last one – the Democratic machine has sold its story too thoroughly to the public. Also, the growing sense of anger at Bush's policies will focus most people more directly on replacing him.

But Nader's voice will be heard. And it is needed.

Does anyone think John Kerry is an adequate standard-bearer for the progressive voice of the country? Consider the looming crisis of global warming. This has been an accepted fact for many years; recently even the conservative Pentagon showed its acquiescence. Ralph Nader can make this crisis real for every citizen of the U.S., even the most unengaged and unaware. Can Kerry?

Americans are overdue for a national system of health care. Other nations have it; it's not beyond our reach. Nader will forcefully show us how we can cover all Americans under a single-payer system. Kerry will tell us we can cover another 61 percent of the 45 million uninsured, over a 10-year period. Will Kerry convince anyone that Bush's program is not good enough? His is not that much better.

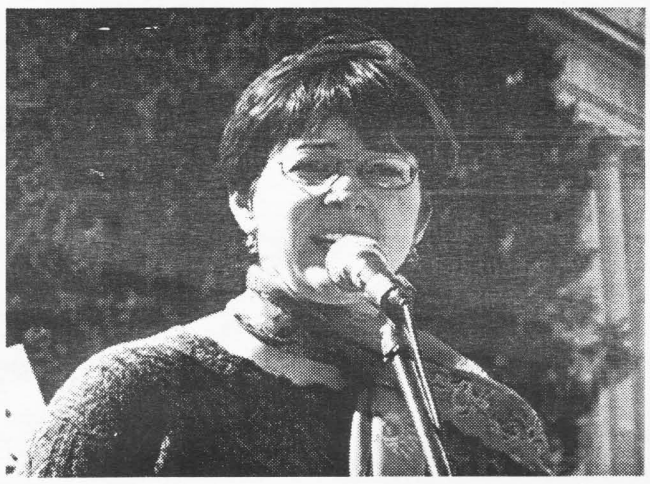
Our foreign policy is in shambles. We no longer talk to other nations; we show them our weapons. We invade other countries on the grounds that we think they may be considering using dangerous weapons on us. This is wrong; it is unworthy of us as Americans. Kerry can't tell us that, though, because he voted for the war. Nader can and will.

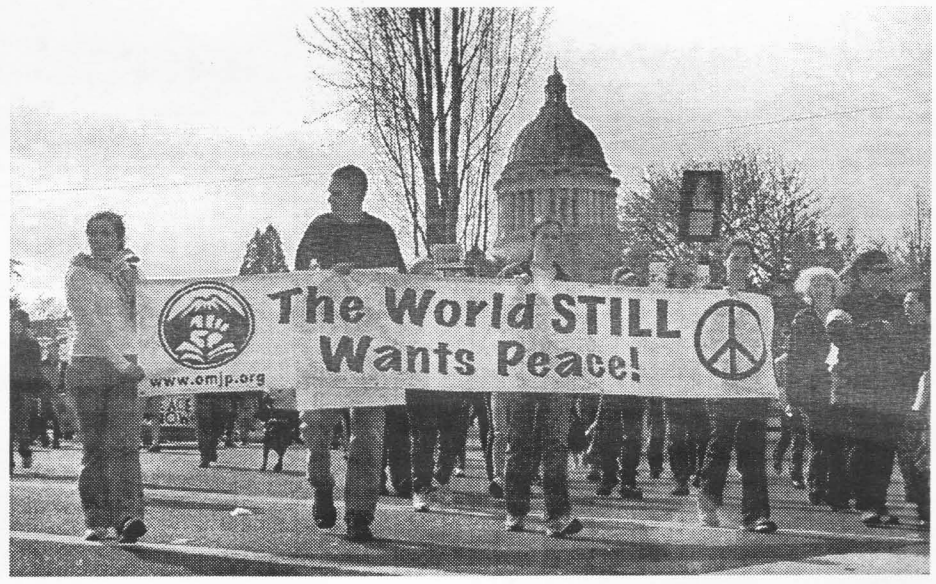
Dennis Kucinich will say the same as Nader, up to the time the Democratic platform is finalized. After that he will be submerged in the belly of the Democratic whale. His function will be to support Kerry.

Ralph Nader is not the Green Party nominee at present, although there are those who would draft him in the Green Party convention, June 2-4. But his voice will be a strong, clear voice for change.

Once again, Nader will draw attention to what needs to be done to make our world good to live in. We are glad he has announced his candidacy.

From page 1: Creating a Peaceful World





Give up the belief that our world is falling apart. Accept your fears. There's nothing wrong with them. Then set them aside and know that we are formidable.

The teenage demonstrators asked to be in the lines closest to the tanks and troops. The troops began firing. Fourteen demonstrators died that day yet the crowd remained non-violent. The troops stopped firing and some troops even broke their rifles. Lithuania's leaders continued to call on its citizens to "hold to principles of nonviolent insubordinate resistance and political and social non-cooperation." They moved street signs around to confuse the invaders. They protected their parliament with unarmed civilians and they trained their volunteer militia in non-violence. None of this gave their country freedom immediately. Yet how long could they have sustained violent action against the Soviets? If the crowd around the TV tower turned to violence the fighting would look sickeningly familiar. It's been said, 'where violent efforts would be easily crushed non-violence may be the only option.' The Lithuanians eventually succeeded in their independence, their non-violent actions accounting for only part of their freedom yet what power they had to stop the red army[1]. Non-violence works.

But it's not usually as fast as the four days in the Philippines. Many times it's decades of work. In Palestine right now entire villages respond to intense violence non-violently, arm in arm with Israeli's who also choose peace. Middle east peace seems impossible, yet Gandhi said, "Think of all the things that were thought impossible until they happened." Who would have thought Lithuania could break free from Russia, or Marcos and Pinochet be overthrown through non-violence. Theodore Roszak said, "People try non-violence for a week and when it doesn't work they go back to violence, which hasn't worked for centuries."

Three hundred seven days ago George Bush visited a carrier in California to celebrate the end of this war yet our soldiers and many Iraqis continue to die. I believe the war in Iraq places all of us in danger. I believe our soldiers go because they believe it is honorable to do so. Currently over 10,800 US troops have been killed, wounded or were sick enough to require airlifting out of Iraq. Over 1,000 amputees from Iraq are beginning to live among us again. And according to the Congressional Budget Office this war spent over $2 billion in taxes from Washington State already. How many children will lose their Mom or Dad today, and tomorrow? How many lives are an acceptable number for an illegal war?

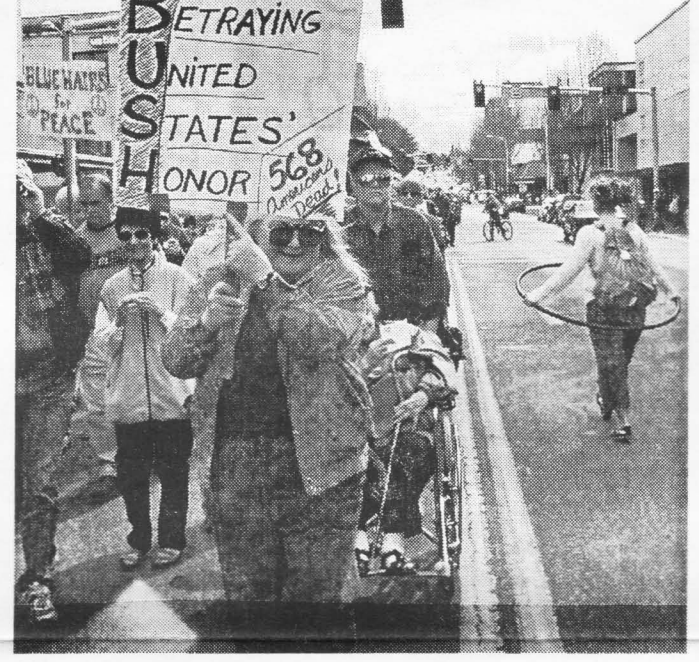
There are soldiers who are now realizing their own beliefs against killing. I was fortunate in that it was not wartime when I made my declaration. My company's solution was to move me to another position, as I was a short timer and out soon. Soldiers potentially face a much harsher response at this moment.

Now we could come up in 5 minutes with 50 different situations we would like to see worked on in this world…but you are here to support our troops by bringing them home. You are here for peace.

So what do we do? Well,

Give up the belief that our world is falling apart.

Accept your fears. There's nothing wrong with them. Then set them aside and know that we are formidable. We are creative. Our country has a powerful history of non-violence and from your stance here today I know you are willing to Create A Peaceful World. I still have no idea how that will look but the alternative is horrible to contemplate.



I'm committing to generating peace in our world. The big guys aren't doing it – it has to be us – committing to peace and making it happen.
Spend time every week giving of yourselves to create a world that you want your children to live in. How much time will you commit to? Two hours per week? An evening per week? More? Choose to participate and make a difference.

Get into groups and research what's been done peacefully. There are many working on a positive future with us. The fourth World Social Forum occurred in Mumbai, India in January with 80,000 people from around the world including several from Olympia, Washington, all joined under the banner 'Another World is Possible.' Eighty thousand people gathering to advance alternatives to a disastrously unfair world. If you want to know more about non-violent tactics and stories and the kind of vibrant democracy we could build and how you can help check out Glen Anderson at The Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation.

Search out alternative media like Democracy Now! — a fair and balanced look at our world. Democracy Now! airs Monday through Friday from 9 to 10am on 89.3 FM and it is online anytime at www.democracynow.org [And on TCTV at 4pm, and at 91.3FM at noon and at 6:30pm].

Don't spend your hard earned dollars at multinationals. They immediately remove 80% of your dollars from this area and their politics are likely not your politics. Buy locally and have your money make a difference in your own community.

Support our troops, bring them home, support them when they resist, and make your thoughts known about the coming draft slated for Spring, 2005.

But the biggest thing is choosing to create a life that enriches and heals our world. Will you be resigned or will you create powerful results. What are you up to in this world?

I'd like to leave you with a quote from Linda Allen

May my hands do the work I was sent here to do.
May my ears know the truth from the lies.
May my voice speak for justice, may I walk unafraid.
May I see through compassionate eyes.

Thank you

On September 11 over 3000 died due to terrorists. On that same day over 33,000 children died due to malnutrition and preventable diseases. How do we know? Because that's how many children die every day of these causes.

1. These stories were taken from Richard Deats' article "The Global Spread of Active Nonviolence" published in "Fellowship" magazine July/August 1996 and "Peace is the Way" Orbis press 2000

Liars Lie and Soldiers Die

By Ron Jacobs

As I write this, Iraqi emergency workers are picking up body parts that belonged to close to fifty Iraqi men who were hoping to pick up a paycheck by joining the new Iraqi military. Victims of another unclaimed attack, the fate of these men is a metaphor for the post-invasion reality in Iraq. No longer in control of their destiny, one can assume that these recruits were hoping to not only get some cash in their pockets, but were also hoping that a new Iraqi military force would get the US occupiers out of their country sooner. Unfortunately they will never find out. Then, again, they won't be disappointed either; when the rest of their fellow recruits realize that the US military has no intention of leaving any time soon.

In fact, the primary reason the US is even attempting to build Iraqi police and military forces is to diminish the numbers of American casualties. So far, it seems that this strategy is working (over 100 dead Iraqi police and army recruits in the past two days and less than 10 GIs in the past week). It's not that the United States is giving up in Iraq, it's just that the Pentagon knows that civilians back in the world don't like to see their soldiers coming home in boxes. In order to continue their war on those opposed to their plans for world domination, the Pentagon needs to keep casualty figures down. Anyone who was alive during Vietnam will remember this strategy—they called it Vietnamization back then.

Unlike Vietnamization, which occurred towards the end of the war, the "Iraqification" of the Iraq conflict is taking place near the beginning of the war. Why? Because Iraq and Afghanistan are just the beginning. As the reader knows, the men and women who rule the US have big plans. They want to re-make the world safe for global capitalism and they want to make a lot of money doing it. So far they've been quite successful in the latter, but the resistance in Iraq is throwing a monkey wrench into the first part of their plan. After all, how can they move on to Syria, Iran and northern Korea if they are still fighting in Iraq?

This, then is their dilemma. They are in a war in Iraq that has no apparent end and they need more troops to fight it. However, their commanders on the ground are telling them that the troops doing the actual perimeter duty and riding the convoys are getting tired and ornery, as are their family and friends living stateside. Add to that the fact that the reasons given to convince the public that war was necessary have been shown to be nothing but lies and you have a situation that seems to spell trouble for Washington's hegemonic plans.

Yet, the war makers march on. Why? Because they can. If one looks to history s/he is certain to find that nations that make war to further their greed don't stop just because their lies have been exposed. In fact, they usually just come up with new lies. Or, even worse, they claim that more killing is necessary to ensure that the dead soldiers did not "die in vain" and that the war must continue to ensure "our safety and freedom." Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz have taken this murderous logic one better when they brazenly state that the increase in death in Iraq means that the US is winning the war.

In addition to the constantly changing "rationale" being spun by the widow makers inside the Beltway, the Iraqis are being promised that they will be running their own country by July of this year and that the US military will no longer be an occupying authority. Of course, this is but one more layer of wool being pulled over the eyes of the world. There is no way in hell that the Iraqis will be running anything more important than their traffic lights after July 1, 2004 (if they're working by then). Any Iraqi government in power then will have less power than the Diem and subsequent regimes did in South Vietnam. A quick look at the proposed constitution makes this clear. Why does the US oppose direct elections? Just like the US opposed elections in Vietnam after the French exit in 1954 because they knew Ho Chi Minh and the nationalist forces would win, they are opposed to elections in Iraq because they know the winners would demand an immediate US exit. Consequently, the Iraqis will have a puppet regime imposed on them. This regime, like those supported by the US in Vietnam, will eventually hold show elections that will elect politicians who will preside only because of the US military presence in the country. It won't be democracy, but we'll be told that it is. Meanwhile, GIs and Iraqis will continue to die as the country slips into civil war. After all, the US military isn't leaving Iraq; they're just changing the look of their operation. The only way they will stop their war is if it becomes politically untenable to wage it. Our job is to make it such.

-this piece is scheduled to appear in *StormWarning*, the newspaper of Vietnam Veterans Against the War-Anti Imperialist.

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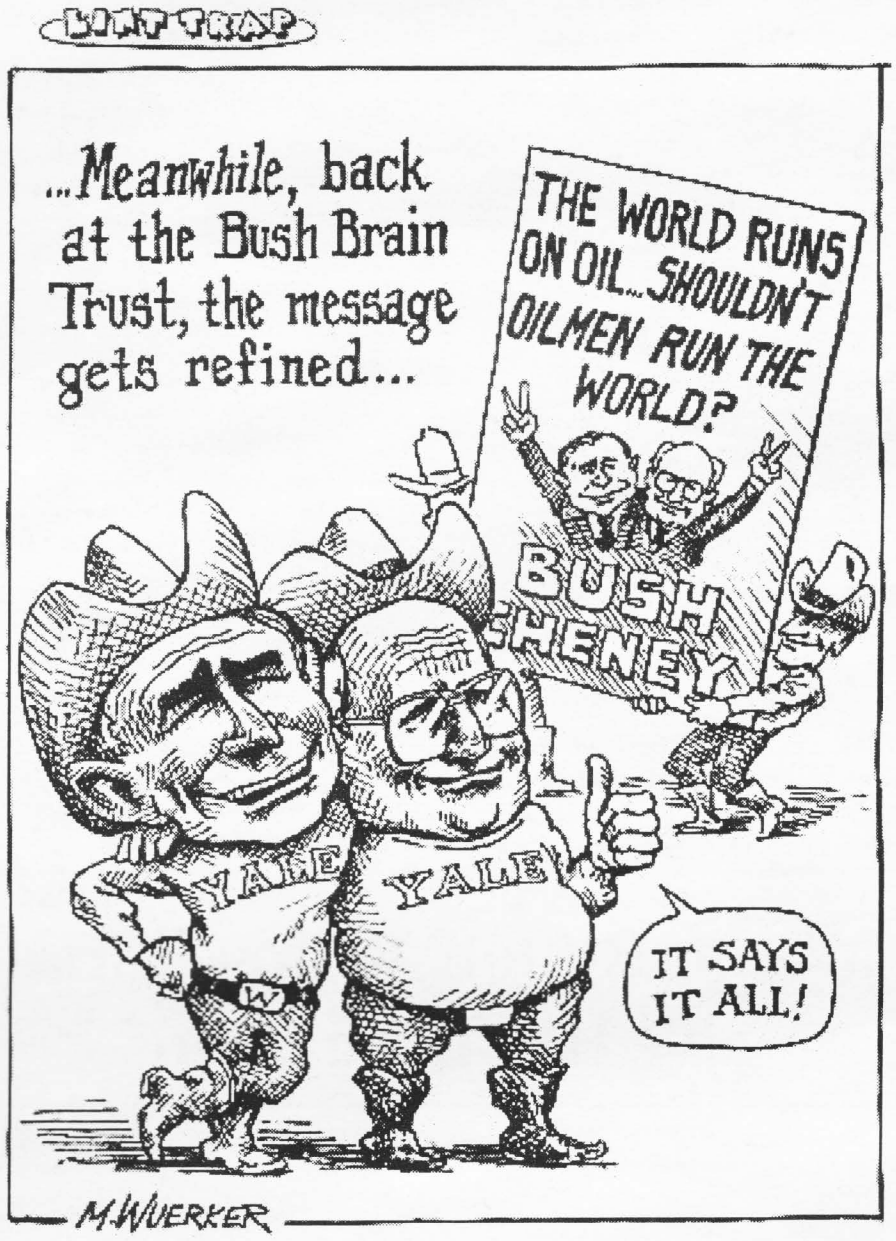

Copyright by Matt Wuerker.

Why does the US oppose direct elections? Just like the US opposed elections in Vietnam after the French exit in 1954 because they knew Ho Chi Minh and the nationalist forces would win, they are opposed to elections in Iraq because they know the winners would demand an immediate US exit.

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"Just a splash from Heritage Fountain & Capitol Lake"

From page 2: Announcements

Staff Representative and an organizer of the Miami Free Trade protest.
Where: **The Evergreen State College**
When: **Wednesday, April 7, 2004 @ 7pm.**

For more information: (TESC Killer Coke Campaign, WOCC)
Laura A. Soracco: 360-867-6006
kcctesc@riseup.net

Israel & Palestine: A "Rainbow of Desire"

Interactive Theatre Event facilitated by Marc Weinblatt

***When*: Saturday, April 10th 2004**
1:30-4:30 PM
***Where*: The Olympia Center**
222 Columbia St. NW
(across from Percival Landing)

The Rainbow of Desire is part of a body of work known internationally as Theatre of the Oppressed. Created by Brazilian visionary, Augusto Boal, Theatre of the Oppressed. is a form of popular community-based education that uses theater as a tool for transformation. Originally developed out of Boal's work with peasant and worker populations, it is now used all over the world for social and political activism, conflict resolution, community building, and government legislation.

You are invited to a unique community dialogue around the Israel/Palestine conflict.

More than simply role playing, this dynamic process invites critical thinking, empathy, and creative problem solving. It can be enlightening, empowering, and also a lot of fun. Anyone is welcome to attend and participate actively, add to the discussion, or simply witness the process.

Free and open to the public

This event is sponsored by The Evergreen State College and members of the Olympia-area community's Middle East Planning Group.

Jacinta McKoy

~March 18, 2004~

Cherished by her community

Peace worker, teacher, sparkling spirit, friend.
How we will miss you!

Instant Runoff Voting Initiative Has Been Filed

From the Coalition of Instant Runoff Voting in Washington

Supporters of Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) announced the filing on March 11, 2004, of an initiative with the Secretary of State called "the Voter's Full Choice Initiative."

The initiative is designed to overcome objections and flaws in the two dueling primary systems that have been hotly debated at the capitol. The legislature in its final hours settled on the "Top Two" system, but included the so-called "Montana primary" as a backup. Governor Locke has hinted a veto of the Top Two part of the legislation, leaving everyone in a state of confusion and facing threats of legal challenges no matter which system eventually becomes law.

Help is on the way. Voters, bewildered and frustrated by the U.S. Supreme Court's voiding of Washington's popular blanket primary law and the legislature's inability to adopt an acceptable substitute, can find solace in the solution proposed by the Coalition for Instant Runoff Voting in Washington. Leaders of that group of election reform activists say their initiative will solve the primary election dilemma and avoids the defects raised by objectors to the two contending primary systems.

Shoreline attorney, Jerry Cronk, treasurer of the Coalition and the principal drafter of the initiative, says that, while a satisfactory fix has perplexed and conflicted lawmakers in Olympia, the initiative presents an ideal solution to the crisis because it eliminates the primary altogether. All candidates would appear on the general election ballot and voters would then be able to rank each candidate in order of preference, regardless of party.

Under the proposal voters would rank candidates in order, as 1st choice, 2nd choice, 3rd choice and so on for as many candidates as there are on the ballot. Cronk points out that "Voters are never forced to choose between two unfavorable candidates just because their favorite candidate is predicted to have no chance, or a slim chance, of winning." And if voters make full choices no candidate will ever be elected without achieving a majority of voter's ultimate choices. No one will win with something like 35% of the vote just because no other candidate got more votes, as sometimes happens in plurality systems.

Proponents explain that IRV merges a series of runoff elections into one election so that the purpose of a primary election is fulfilled in the general election and it allows a voter's backup choice or choices to become effective if the candidate receiving a voter's higher choice fails to achieve enough votes. It is no different, they say, than making a second choice at the store when your favorite flavor, style or brand of product is not available.

The system is similar to election systems used in Australia, Ireland and to elect the mayor of London. Last year voters in San Francisco adopted IRV to elect city officials. Several IRV proposals have been introduced in the Washington legislature during the last 3 sessions, some of them gaining preliminary committee approvals, but finally dying in later stages of the legislative process.

Backers of the measure contend that primaries are costly, poorly attended and are unnecessary if IRV is adopted. "The best primary is no primary," according to Brent White, president of the Coalition and its chief spokesman in Olympia. White notes that this is so not only because taxpayers will save a lot of money, but also because it is a much fairer system for electing officeholders than the current plurality system and doesn't suffer any of the glaring drawbacks of the competing "Cajun primary" or "Montana primary" systems now stalemated in the legislature.

The initiative is directed to the legislature. Supporters have until 10 days before the next legislative session in January, 2005, to gather 197,734 valid signatures. If they do, the legislature could either adopt the initiative or reject it. If the legislature rejects the measure it would go on the next general election ballot. The legislature could also propose its own amended version of the law and if it did both measures would go on the ballot.

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Initiative organizers claim support from a wide variety of politically concerned citizens from all across the political spectrum. They believe committed voters, who persist in voting their conscience, will not have to "waste" their votes on long-shot favorite candidates. Backers also believe that influential mainstream politicians will be converted when they realize that IRV will solve the "spoiler" problem they often face because under IRV major party candidates are likely to benefit from the second-choices of minor party voters.

The initiative also cites a number of other advantages, including:

1. Voter interest and turnout should increase because a voter has more choices and all votes will be more meaningful than under the present system.
2. Successful candidates will reflect more closely the will of the people and a clearer mandate for a winning candidate's position will be created, giving better direction for policy making.
3. Positive, issue-based campaigns will be encouraged and negative campaigning significantly reduced because candidates will have to appeal to a broader audience in order to attract second and third choice votes.
4. Losing candidates, who offered programs acceptable to some of the voters, will not be forever tagged as "spoilers", or the "candidate who helped elect the candidate of the opposing party."
5. Voters will find the system sensible and simple to understand — as simple as 1-2-3.

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Related informational links about IRV:

http://www.chrisgates.net/irv/ (IRV demo/flash animation)
http://www.fixour.us/multimedia.html
http://www.fairvote.org/factshts/index.htm

The Policification of the US Military in Iraq

By Marco Rosaire Rossi

Since the 1980s, there has been a great effort in the United State to combine domestic policing with foreign military work. This effort, under the guise of the "drug war" and more recently the "war on terror," has resulted in the creation of SWAT teams and other similar militarized police units, a greater use of less lethal weapons such as tasers and tear gas, and, probably the most damaging to a democratic society, the expansion of police powers at a lost of civil liberties. Since the terrorist attacks on September 11th, these effort has been enhanced. However, this has not merely resulted in a further militarization of police but also a policization of the military. American policing style is being exported to other countries, sometimes willingly but often grudgingly. As would be expected, this combining of military and police as blatant violation of the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 has resulted in numerous human rights violations, police and military corruption, and an increase the resentment for United States from foreign nations.

On Dec 27, 2003, the television news show 60 minutes do an exposé on a battalion Florida National Guardsmen, many of who were Miami cops who were bringing their knowledge of policing Miami to fight the drug war to Iraq to battle the Iraqi resistance against the US occupation. In charge of this battalion was Lt. Col Hector Mirabile who had served in the Miami police force for over 24 years. Miami is far from an ideal model of police force, that is unless the police force that is being constructed is one riddled with corruption and repressive tactics. Throughout the 1980s, Miami experience scandal after scandal as reports came to light of its police officers engaging in drug dealing, theft, sex crimes involving children, even premeditated murder. Corruption became such a problem for Miami police that between 1985 and 1988 the department was compelled to suspend, fire, or force into resignation 100 officers. This action however is a token reform to the amount of corruption that had been occurring and much of the culture of police misconduct remains within the department today.

However, a concern for human rights and the deterring of misconduct does not seem to be part of the US military agenda. If anything the military, using police tactics, is engaging in similar behavior, if not than far worse, of those officers committed in Miami.

Without a secure constitution, like in the United States, Iraqis are susceptible to numerous human rights abuses by occupying forces. Mirabile in his gang enter Iraqi homes without a warrant, question people at will, do searches of and confiscate personal property without due processes, and make arrest at whim. Without information on where they are going or how long they will be there, people are sent away to prisons with the most horrible conditions. Before the war, the United States condemned Saddam Hussein for the notorious conditions in the Abu Ghraib prisons. Now the US is using that same prison to incarcerate thousands of Iraqis. The amount of people arrested in Iraq is becoming a primary concern of Iraq's human rights organizations. Malek Dohan al-Hassan, the head of the Lawyers Syndicate in Baghdad, has condemned the United States' disregard for Iraqi's civil liberties. "All they do is put a bag on their heads, bind their hands behind them with plastic handcuffs and take them away. Families don't know where they go... They (the US military) violate human rights up to their ears."

While al-Hassan makes this claim, Mirabile reports to the American press that US forces do not use torture on Iraqi citizens in police custody and paternalistically explains how the United States has "taught" Iraqi police officers to "use their intelligence" when trying to extract information from a person in custody.

The exact number of Iraqis arrested is unknown, but the US military has conceded to holding at least 12,800 prisoners and admits to arresting dozens of people each day. On Jan 7, the Iraqi Governing Council took credit for the release of 506 Iraqi citizen held by the military. The prisoners were released because US forces could not prove were involved with Saddam Hussein's regime, had planned attacks against American soldiers, had tribal leaders to acts as their sponsors, and were willing

to sign a statement renouncing violence. Others are not as lucky or willing to cooperate and still remain incarcerated. In addition, many sections of Iraq's civil society do not feel that a release 4 percent of the known arrested population of Iraq is enough. As expected, this ill treatment of Iraqi ignites resistance to the occupation in both peaceful and violent ways.

The recent acts of violence resistance against the occupation involves attacks on US convoys and Iraqi police stations. Near the town of Mahmudiyah, which is 20 miles south of Baghdad, an explosion wounded three people and killed an American soldier. Just days before that attack, an police station was bombed in the town of Suwayrah killing three policeman and 11 others. These attacks create an unstable situation for American soldiers, 530 of which who have died while occupying Iraq since March 20th.

The dangerous position that American soldiers are in and the necessity to quickly put to rest the turmoil in Iraq has brought US officials to seek the rapid Iraqification of the occupation. US forces have been recruiting Iraqis to police their own towns, however they have done so with great reluctance, often under-arming and ill-equipping Iraqi police officers. This has put Iraqi police in a circumstance that is extremely dangerous, more so than there American counterparts. Iraqi police have become one of the chosen target of the violent resistance against the occupation. While American soldier go back to their armored bases with a plethora of weapons and equipment, Iraq police officers attempt to secure themselves in bombed out police stations. It is only fairly recently that the Iraqi police have been armed with AK-47s. Why the great reluctance to arm Iraqi police? "Bottom line is, we didn't trust them," says Lt. Col Mirabile.

On the United States' part, some of the suspicious has proven itself accurate. US forces have discovered that certain members of the Iraqi police force have worked in league with bomb-makers and members of the resistance. Indeed, the resistance in Iraq is one that appears to have cut across all social lines of the country, adding more evidence to the belief that the total occupation of Iraq is not likely to occur soon and the US will probably draw itself into another Vietnam-like situation that will cost of the lives of thousands-possibly millions of people.

Sources: 60 Minutes News website, Associated Press, Police Brutality: A Reader for the Twenty- First Century, Prison Legal News.

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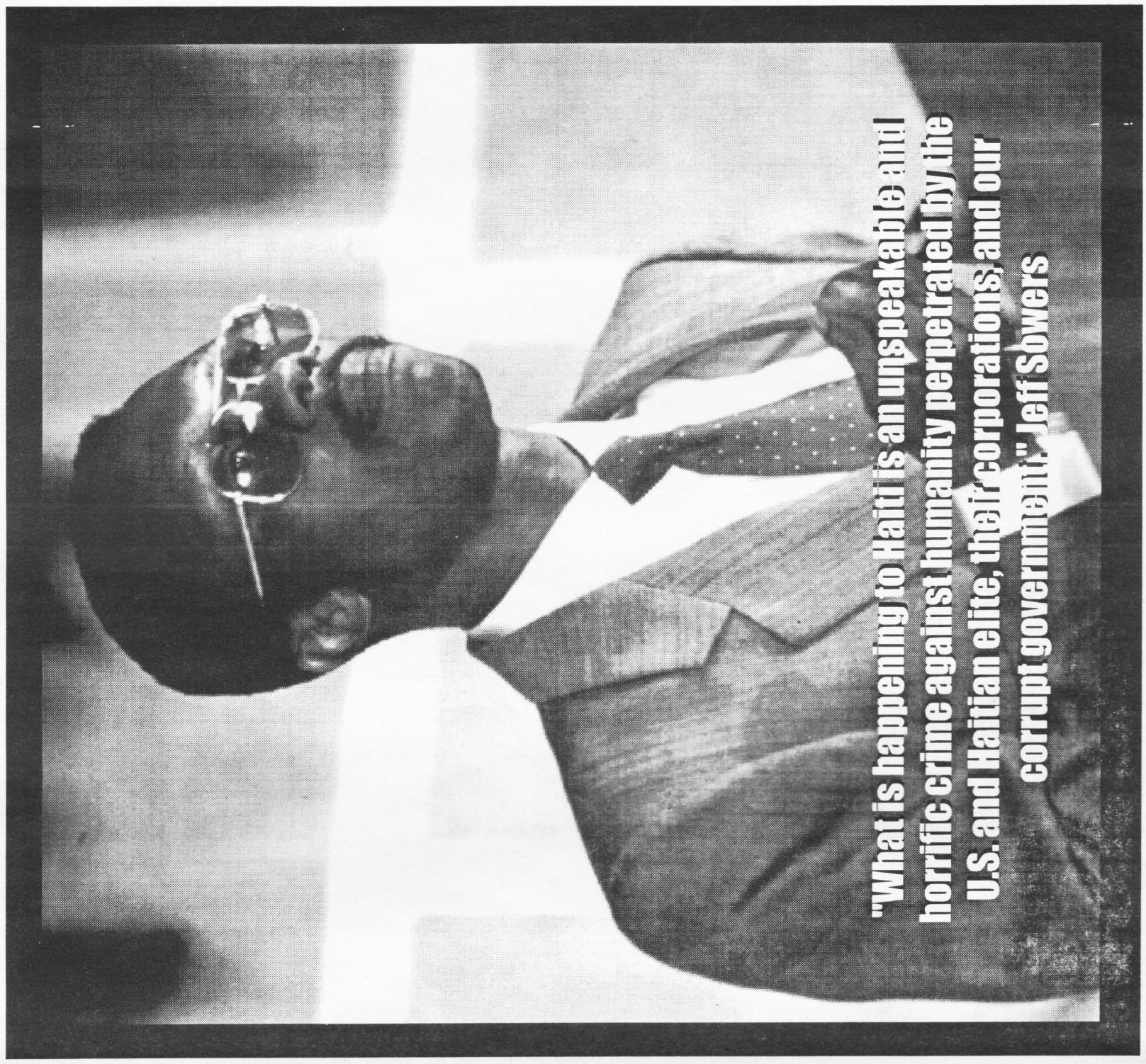
"What is happening to Haiti is an unspeakable and horrific crime against humanity perpetrated by the U.S. and Haitian elite, their corporations, and our corrupt government." Jeff Sbwers

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